The Rothbard-Rockwell Report
TRIPLE R

NATION OF REBELS

Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

Washington is the most boring word in the English language. Is there anybody alive who really cares what the boobs on Capitol Hill are up to these days? Fewer people than ever know the names of their Senators and Reps. Why should they? In fact, does anyone really care who's president, except for prurient reasons?

It is symptomatic of the most encouraging and exhilarating trend of our times. We are living in the midst of a great government meltdown, a period in which leviathan still lives, but can no longer command anyone's attention–but for those it's victimizing at the moment. As a result, the government's hold on the public is less secure with every passing day.

This constitutes a radical reversal of American civic culture. As we learned in civics class, the key job of the American citizen is to stay involved. Follow the legislative process, salute the flag, honor the military, cheer for the home team (meaning the government), and, above all, vote. And the reason for this involvement?

The myth that we govern ourselves must be sustained and reaffirmed with every election. But voter turnout has been plummeting for nearly a decade. In next year's midterm elections it could fall as low as 35 percent. But the really telling date will be the presidential election of 2000. What happens if they hold an election and nobody comes?

Mass civic involvement in the modern era requires certain political preconditions. The public needs to believe it is dependent, at some level, on the federal government. It gives us security (economic and personal) and, in exchange, we give it our undying (and dying) loyalty.

The key difficulty for the political right since the 1930s has been to crack this sense of dependency. If the growth of leviathan was ever threatened, the partisans of power were always able to play their trump card: we must have faith in government. And with a depression, a world war, and a cold war, who could disagree?

No longer. That civic culture has evaporated, and with it, the false sense of civic duty that sustained the American people's loyalty to government. Gone too are the social and political forces that have long suppressed the people's historical passion for revolt.

Albert Jay Nock called the state a fiction that would cease to exist when the masses either ignored it or mocked it. He was echoing a long line of classical liberals and political philosophers who have explained this central fact about the state: it is made up of a tiny minority. The governed must always outnumber the governors. This is why statecraft depends most fundamentally on the willingness to obey. That in turn requires that people have a darn good reason for doing so, since paying taxes, obeying regulations, and marching off to war are hardly in their interest. The past few years have provided us with dozens of examples of how quickly power can crumble when the public's willingness to consent is withdrawn.

That's precisely why the establishment is so worried about the present nationwide cold shoulder. Not paying attention to politics and to government pronouncements is one

continued on page 7

INSIDE

Intelligence Briefing 2
Powerful Song, Man 9
JEFFREY TUCKER
Second Wind 11
PAUL COTTFRIED
The GOP Tax Shuffle 13
L. H. R., JR.
The Indispensables 14
L. H. R., JR.
The Costs of War 16

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INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

◆ **Should the federal government be conducting murder trials?** First, there's the problem of moral credibility. The U.S. government doesn't exactly have clean hands. Forget Waco and Ruby Ridge. Murder has long been an essential part of U.S. foreign policy. Second, there's the problem of finding jurors courageous enough to rule against the feds. Would they face exposure? Audits? Wire taps? Worse? Just the prospect has a chilling effect. Third, the deck is inherently stacked against the accused: the world's biggest and most powerful government vs. a small fry with a government-appointed lawyer.

◆ **"Inappropriate laughter" has long been a hate crime.** Now it's struck that bastion of PC, Hollywood. When Universal Studios test ran its new movie, *The Jackal*, the audience laughed and cheered in all the wrong places. Bruce Willis, playing "The Jackal" terrorist, kisses a guy on the lips in a gay bar, leading the audience into paroxysms of laughter. Later, when the gay demands sex after they've gone home together, Willis shoots him, having staged the whole encounter so he could have a place to hide. The audience responded to the killing with loud cheers. The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) is demanding that both scenes be cut (*The Drudge Report*, June 10, 1997).

◆ **The "socialist" French prime minister Lionel Jospin campaigned on a platform opposed to any increases in taxes and spending.** The Democrat Bill Clinton favors private investment, not foreign aid, for Eastern Europe. Laborite leader Tony Blair is against British labor union privileges. Now if only Republican conservatives would move that far to the right.

◆ **What else do we need to know about U.S. "defense" than that the flaky, weepy, and depraved Kelly Flinn** had a million dollars of taxpayers money spent on her training. Training to do what? Drop atomic bombs on foreign cities, killing hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians, if Bill Clinton told her to. Such weapons–invented by Franklin D. Roosevelt's cabal of mad scientists–are inherently immoral, since they target non-combatants rather than opposing soldiers.

◆ **Commie poet, pederast, doper, and culture-wrecker Allen Ginsburg** (1926-1997) is hailed by *Rolling Stone* magazine for his "talent and example." The magazine is especially proud of Ginsburg's 1984 article, "Thoughts on Hearing the Beatles for the First Time": "I remember the precise moment, the precise night, that I went to this place in New York City called the Dom and they turned on 'I Want To Hold Your Hand,' and I heard that high, yodeling alto sound of the OOOH that went right through my skull, and I realized it was going to go through the skull of Western civilization.... I remember realizing...that black dancing had been brought back to the white West, people were going to return to their bodies–Americans were going to shake their ass. The Beatles changed American consciousness, [doing] more than anything or anyone to prepare us for some kind of open-minded, openhearted relationship with each other–and the rest of the world." Sex, drugs, and rock and roll.

◆ **Is the federal government to blame for the North Dakota flooding?** The *New American* points out that since 1993, the feds have "halted the clearing of weeds, trees, and silt from flood channels," which has compromised the structural integrity of earthen levees and clogged channels, thus causing backups (June 9, 1997). Is there anything wrong with this country that isn't traceable to the central state?

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◆ **Ain't government regulators wonderful?** An FAA airplane–a Learjet, no less–nearly crashed into a twin-engine, 37-seat USAirways propeller plane in mid-May. The commercial plane had been cleared for takeoff at D.C.'s National Airport, and had just lifted off the ground, when the federal boneheads taxied onto the runway–unannounced. A split second spared the lives of the citizens, almost killed by government malfeasance. The government must have supposed it had the right of way, as it does in the rest of national life (CNN, May 15, 1997).

◆ **How awful that the lovely Bonnie Honig of Harvard is being denied tenure,** wails the *New York Times* in a front-page story. It seems that president Neil Rudenstine doesn't think her work is up to speed. And of what does this great scholaress's work consist? Extreme feminist, egalitarian, deconstructionist, postmodern rants, complete with the usual wooly-headed jargon designed to throw sand in readers' eyes. It seems that La Honig is an "expert" on Hannah Arendt, the fierce opponent of the totalitarian state (and social democracy too). Honig's scholarship consists of denouncing Arendt for not championing blacks, women, the "poor," and other official victims (*New York Times*, May 19, 1997).

◆ **Congratulations to Ron Paul.** His great amendment to get us out of the UN garnered 56 votes in the House. More important, a nationwide campaign by patriotic groups resulted in other Congressmen being flooded with mail and calls telling them to back Ron. Since no regular American wants anything to do with the UN, this is a great consciousness-raising issue. No more taxpayer money for the UN. The U.S. should pull out, and invite the rump organization to head for foreign shores.

◆ **What Republican traitors opposed Ron?** Courtesy of Gun Owners of America, here they are. (Note: all Democrats voted against the Paul Amendment, except Hall [TX] and Taylor [MS].)

Archer	Gilman	Oxley
Armey	Goodlatte	Packard
Bachus	Goodling	Pappas
Baker	Goss	Parker
Ballenger	Graham	Paxon
Barrett (NE)	Granger	Pease
Barton	Greenwood	Peterson (PA)
Bass	Gutknecht	Petri
Bateman	Hansen	Pitts
Bereuter	Hastert	Porter
Bilbray	Hastings (WA)	Portman
Bilirakis	Hayworth	Pryce (OH)
Bliley	Herger	Quinn
Blunt	Gill	Radanovich
Boehlert	Hilleary	Ramstad
Boehner	Hobson	Redmond
Bono	Hoekstra	Regula
Brady	Horn	Riggs
Bryant	Hostettler	Rogan
Bunning	Houghton	Rogers
Burr	Hutchinson	Roukema
Callahan	Hyde	Sanford
Calbert	Inglis	Saxton
Camp	Jenkins	Sensenbrenner
Campbell	Johnson (CT)	Shaw
Canady	Kasich	Shays
Cannon	Kelly	Shimkus
Castle	Kim	Shuster
Chabot	King (NY)	Skeen
Chambliss	Klub	Smith (MI)
Christensen	Knollenberg	Smith (NJ)
Coble	Kolbe	Smith (OR)
Collins	LaHood	Smith (TX)
Cook	Latham	Smith (WA)
Cooksey	La Tourette	Snowbarger
Cox	Lazio	Souder
Davis (VA)	Leach	Spence
Deal	Lewis (CA)	Stearns
Diaz-Balart	Lewis (KY)	Sununu
Dreier	Livingston	Talent
Dunn	LoBiondo	Tauzin
Ehlers	McCollum	Taylor (NC)
Ehrlich	McCrery	Thomas
Emerson	McDade	Thornberry
English	McHigh	Thune
Ewing	McInnis	Tiahrt
Fawell	McKeon	Upton
Forbes	Metcalf	Walsh
Fowler	Mica	Watkins
Fox	Miller (FL)	Watts (OK)
Franks (NJ)	Molinari	Weldon (PA)
Frelinghuysen	Morella	Weller
Gallegly	Myrick	White
Ganske	Neumann	Whitfield
Gekas	Northup	Wicker
Gilchrist	Norwood	Wolf
Dillmor	Nussle	Young (FL)

◆ **From the lying ads for the movie *Buddy*, you could easily think it a warm-hearted family flic.** In fact, it's a dark and creepy film–allegedly based on a true story–about a neurotic 1920s rich couple, Dr. and Mrs. Lintz, who maintain a huge private menagerie on their Long Island estate. They dress their chimps like children and have them live in their house. Then the crazy Gertrude Lintz character–played by Renee Russo–decides to raise a baby gorilla to adulthood, and has a definitely odd and implicitly sexual relationship with him before he almost kills her. This is no children's movie. Cheaply made and alternatively boring and weird–without one interesting character, animal or human–it is no adult film either. Bad robotics as well.

◆ **Burned Bush**: Texas Governor George W. Bush was blocked by the legislature in his centralizing, tax-raising scheme to move school funding from the localities to Austin. Why did he want to? To make everyone "equal," of course. Then Bush barred from his press conferences *The Lone Star Report*, a political newsletter co-edited by famed newsman Bill Murchison, on grounds that its opposition to his plan was "unfair." But Bush had to back down after his actions were reported nationally by columnist Bob Novak (June 9, 1997).

◆ **Will St. Petersburg secede?** The two major secession groups have just joined forces to take their relatively prosperous city out of the statist Russian Federation. Secessionists note that independence–as a fourth Baltic republic–is the only answer to the continuing socialism and increasing tyranny of the central government in Moscow. We are, they say, a "European city in an Asian empire" (*Strategic Investment*, May 14, 1997).

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◆ **The air-bag fiasco has done serious damage to the government's regulatory credibility**. These supposed life-saving devices have killed 66 people, 39 of them children. Since the expensive bags were forced on the public, these deaths are blood on the hands of the bureaucrats and lobbyists who imposed them. And pay no attention to the far-flung estimates that they've saved 1,800 lives: the government doesn't disaggregate the data according to whether the life saved was due to air bags or seat belts.

Neither do the data consider how many people may have suffered "minor" injuries from air bags, like facial burns and eye injuries. Anecdotally, however, it appears that this is extremely common–and permanently disfiguring. The usual victims are women five feet tall or shorter. The National Transportation Safety Board has been reduced to suggesting, on National Public Radio, that such people install pedal extenders.

Why won't the government allow consumers to disconnect their air bags? Of course, there's the natural bureaucratic mentality that never admits a mistake. But usually in such cases, there are private lobbyists also against the idea. Well, here's the smoking gun: the main supplier of air bags is TRW, the influential merchant of death and corporate lobbying power (CNN May 29, 1997). TRW is running full-page ads all over the country trying to "educate" the public about the glories of their air bags. The left once talked about profits as blood money. In this case, it applies.

● **The Paula Jones lawsuit–and the Supreme Court decision giving it the go-ahead–warms the heart of every freedom-loving American**. But reading the court decision is distressing. It turns out you can only sue the president if he harms you in his unofficial capacity, which for all practical purposes means when he's out of office. While he's *in* office, he and his agents can steal your property, spy on your family and bank accounts, send you and your kids to war, wreck your business, and burn your church down–all without facing legal consequences.

Doesn't this mean that government is above the law? Sure, but as the Supreme Court points out, the very business of government is to violate laws everyone else is supposed to adhere to. The court cites its decision in Ferri *v.* Ackerman (1979) (try not to laugh yourself silly):

"As public servants, [government officials] represent the interest of society as a whole. The conduct of their official duties may adversely affect a wide variety of different individuals, each of whom may be a potential source of future controversy. The societal interest in providing such public officials with the maximum ability to deal fearlessly and impartially with the public at large has long been recognized as an acceptable justification for official immunity. The point of immunity for such officials is to forestall an atmosphere of intimidation that would conflict with their resolve to perform their designated functions in a principled fashion."

● **What's the "distinguishing mark" that Paula Jones saw?** Not a bald-eagle tatoo, as rumored, but a mole the size of a quarter high up on the inside of the presidential left thigh, reports the *New York Post* (May 30, 1997).

◆ **We were startled when Clinton proclaimed as the key national goal for the next ten years, an AIDS vaccine**. After all, virtually all cases of AIDS are spread by sharing needles with infected dopers, or engaging in anal sex. Imagine, says Charles Krauthammer, the president calling for the government to produce a vaccine against lung cancer so people could smoke to their heart's content (*Washington Post*, May 30, 1997). Hey, sounds like a great job for the private pharmaceutical industry!

◆ **Women who have their breasts enlarged** tend to drink a lot, dye their hair, and be promiscuous, according to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Are any of these risk factors for the troubles some implanted women have suffered (London *Daily Telegraph*, May 29, 1997)?

◆ **Chalk one up for the right to heal.** Dr. Stanislaw Burzynski of a famed Houston cancer clinic has won a battle with the FDA over his right to administer unconventional treatments, which his patients–usually abandoned by official medicine–swear by. The feds tried to nail him on interstate delivery of unapproved drugs, 34 counts of mail fraud, and contempt of court. After one deadlocked jury, a second unanimously acquitted him. So a 20 year legal battle ends in another blow to the evil empire (MS-NBC, May 29, 1997).

◆ **Free love wreaks havoc among elephants too**. Six months ago, scientists in Kruger National Park in South Africa implanted contraceptives–based on the human variety–in females. The results have been disastrous, for the contraceptives make the cow elephants appear to be permanently in heat. Under normal conditions, they're available for sex only two days every four months. Now, females are constantly harassed by permanently excited bull elephants, and baby elephants born before the experiment have

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died from lack of care. The expensive birth-control scheme was tried since the traditional solution to overcrowding–letting the natives kill and eat the elephants–is now politically incorrect (London *Daily Telegraph*, May 29, 1997).

◆ **If you've seen one computer-generated dinosaur, you've seen them all.** Thinking of going to "Lost World: Jurassic Park"? Don't. Unlike the original, there is nothing scary or even tense in the remake, which also lacks a plot, acting, and dialogue. Worse, this time, the dinosaurs are the good guys, protecting their young against an evil Wasp businessman who wants to put one (horrors) in the San Diego zoo. All the capitalists are eaten, of course, while the environmentalists triumph. The commie organizations Greenpeace and EarthFirst are even praised by name. The male lead, Jeff Goldblum, might be on drugs as he mumbles his way through the movie. The girl who plays his 11-year-old black computer-expert daughter is also unconvincing as she single-handedly saves everyone by kicking away a thousand-pound velociraptor.

◆ **Buy and hold, James Grant says of UST Corp.**, maker of the Skoal and Copenhagen brands of tobacco snuff. The company is virtually debt free (and traditionally so) and enjoys $1.4 billion in annual revenues. It's a top candidate for a takeover, even with the war on tobacco, and could take on a couple of billion in debt and not feel it. But it won't do so: management prefers insulating itself from the coming Fed-induced interest rate hike that will cause other companies to tumble hard and fast. UST, formerly U.S. Tobacco, was also a favorite of the late investment genius and conservative giant Bill Rickenbacker (*Grants*, $650 per year, 30 Wall Street, NY 10005).

◆ **We hold no brief for Laurent Kabila, new head of the Congo, but why is he being trashed in the U.S. press?** We're told that he did not immediately institute democracy (just what everyone in that impoverished country needs, a vote), or name his cabinet quickly enough, or appoint Etienne Tshisekedi as prime minister. None of these points were raised when CIA-asset Mobutu Sese Seko was happily murdering and looting for more than 30 years. Nor were we told that Mobutu's full adopted name means: the rooster who mounts every chicken in the yard. As to Tshisekedi, he must be a CIA asset as well. Otherwise the press would not be babbling about him. The CIA likes to own the government *and* the official opposition in a country like the former Zaire. Kabila's sin is that he's not on the CIA payroll.

◆ **This month's Dumbest Voucher-Pitch Award** goes to Dan Coats, a Republican Senator from Indiana. He wants to spend your tax dollars sending the "poor" to private school. So he says: "it is inconceivable that anyone in good conscience could condemn low-income children to attend schools that not only fail to educate them but also cannot even assure their personal safety. Some of our public schools have become wastelands of violence and despair. We cannot begin to imagine the fears of a mother who is forced to send her child through barbed wire and metal detectors into a combat zone masquerading as an education institution." Note that this has nothing to do with the hoodlums actually attending these schools; it's the brick and mortar that's the problem (*Roll Call*, June 10, 1997).

● **Barbie has a new friend: Becky in a wheelchair.** "We for quite some time have had ethnic diversity in Barbie's world," said vice president Nancy Zwiers, "but we were overdue in offering a friend who has a disability." But we may need an American Dolls With Disabilities Act: "Becky's wheelchair won't fit in most Barbie houses–even the elevator is too small" (CNN, May 21, 1997). In following the progressive agenda of the Americans With Disabilities Act, however, Mattel needs to take a further step. Surely diversity also demands Mentally Disabled Barbie.

◆ **Ever notice how handy the passive voice is?** Take the front page of the *Los Angeles Times*, swooning over the fact that some people at the University of Mississippi don't hate their ancestors. The school long ago dissed the Southern flag. Now the liberal chancellor wants to ban the mascot, Colonel Reb, and the playing of "Dixie" at football games, and some students are resisting. They even wave the dreaded flag from the stands. So it's perfectly reasonable that "violence broke out when a group of African American students got into an altercation at the Rebel Barn." After a Johnnie Cochran speech, "students rampaged through the store, ripping up every flag in sight" (May 22, 1997).

◆ **Media bias**: when leftist politicians like Clinton and Britain's Blair stop backing tax-and-spend policies, the media say they've "moved to the center," not to the right. When Republicans back tax-and-spend policies, they too have "moved to the center," not to the left.

◆ **"Conservative" coin dealer Craig Rhyne went belly-up last fall**, says Mark Skousen (*Mark Skousen's Personal Shapshots*, June 1997). Worse, Rhyne–owner of Rhyne Precious Metals in Seattle–took $3.6 million

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of his customers' life savings for himself. Rhyne is going to the federal pen for 33 months, but Skousen only criticizes him for "violating the number-one rule of business: always keep back some of your profits to protect yourself in bad times." What malarkey! This was no entrepreneurial error. Rhyne stole people's money. He's a thief. P.S. Does this mean that you should buy from Ron Paul Coins (which, we note in the interests of full disclosure, supports the *Triple R*)? Of course!

◆ **The glories of empire.** Should Puerto Rico become a state? Yes, says Don Young (R-AK), whose committee just passed a bill allowing a referendum on the topic. Not by Americans, of course, just by the Puerto Ricans. The excuse is the coming 100th anniversary of the War on Spain, when the U.S. attacked Spanish possessions in order to capture the Philippines as a coaling station for imperialism against China. Puerto Rico, Guam, and other jewels in the crown of Manifest Destiny were added bonuses. Our view: Puerto Rico should be set free, thus freeing the U.S. taxpayer.

◆ **Two cheers for Bruce Bartlett,** long-time supply sider, for exposing the fraud of the "national sales tax" supported by a number of think tanks on the take. Bartlett shows that to replace the income tax, the sales tax wouldn't be 16.6 percent as the official line has it. Instead, it would have to be 22.4, or, including the payroll tax, a whopping 36.1 percent. Talk about national disaster. The difference in the figures: the official studies have state and local governments paying sales taxes on their purchases, an assumption never explicitly figured into press releases (*Washington Times*, April 27, 1997). Now if Bartlett would just give up his beloved "flat tax" and come out for lower taxes like the *Triple R*...

◆ **The Tim McVeigh trial didn't demonstrate that he was the bomber.** Even the *New York Times* was shocked that he was convicted on so little evidence. The government "presented no evidence of where or when the bomb was built and placed in the Ryder rental truck that carried it; no witness who saw Mr. McVeigh in that truck on the day of the bombing, and indeed, no witness who saw Mr. McVeigh in Oklahoma City that day." One reason for the weak case: the government eliminated any "witness who might have introduced problems for the government" (June 3, 1997). Hmmm. What problems might those be?

As to forensic evidence, no materials from the bomb were in McVeigh's car, on his shoes, or on his clothes. Meanwhile, Judge Richard Matsch wouldn't allow the testimony of paid ATF informant Carol Howe, who says the government had prior knowledge of the bombing. As Glen Wilburn of Oklahoma City, who lost two grandchildren in the bombing, told the *Rocky Mountain News*, "you bring Carol Howe in, let her tell her story, well, the federal government doesn't look too good." Neither would Matsch allow the full report on pro-prosecutor corruption at the FBI lab.

The predominant part of the prosecution's evidence consisted of victim testimony—proving what was never in dispute. More alarmingly, the government made McVeigh's politics the central issue in order to make a long-lasting political point: all right-wing populists are suspects. Their opinions are illegal and punishable.

Pursuant to its goal, the FBI lied to McVeigh's sister by telling her she could get the death penalty for "treason," offered legal immunity to admitted liars and drug dealers, refused immunity to milder wrong doers who might help the defense, suppressed evidence, suppressed witnesses, and tarnished reputations. In the appalling cross examination of the heroic Deborah Brown—who risked prosecution herself by telling the truth about the Fortiers' frenetic drug use—the prosecution even minimized the seriousness of methamphetamine use. Say, isn't it the government that's been running a war on drugs for a quarter of a century?

The defense raised the strong possibility that McVeigh had *not* stolen a stash of guns from Arkansas (Michael Fortier's lawyer asked the prosecution not to claim the guns were stolen). The defense suggested that the license plate on McVeigh's car had been taken off by a third party, probably to provoke arrest. And a cross-examination of Michael Fortier revealed that the government signaled how serious it was about wanting him to cooperate by planting evidence in his jeep: earplugs like the ones McVeigh supposedly had in his possession when he was arrested.

Whether McVeigh is actually guilty (and to what extent), and how many others were involved, will always be a matter of dispute. Chances are that he knew something of the impending bombing, whether or not he actually helped arrange it or carry it off. But only a handful of people know for sure. And credible evidence has it that Andreas Strassmeir, the shadowy German national and ATF informant, was directly involved. He was allowed to leave the country after the bomb went off. The FBI, which interviewed 25,000 people, didn't want to talk to Strassmeir, and the judge didn't allow his name to be brought into the trial. RRR

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NATION OF REBELS from page 1

way, perhaps the most effective way, of rebellion.

Neoconservative pundits understand this as well as anyone. Bill Bennett told the *Wall Street Journal* that his new goal is to restore America's sense of national involvement, and for this reason, he no longer criticizes the government in his speeches.

Washington politicians have developed their own mode of response, and it is as silly as it is ineffective. They spend most of their waking days not legislating, but merely trying to hit on a subject that someone cares about. The trend has accelerated at a dramatic pace this year. Washington editors of major newspapers have been reduced to writing stories on the astounding lack of stories to write about.

Think back even two years ago, back when Congress still mattered. What plans they had for us, those Republicans. They would scrap welfare, abolish the income tax, level bureaucracies, restore defense. And how 'bout those Democrats? They were going to fix education, bring the Internet to the ghetto, cure AIDS, and generally eliminate all human suffering.

As usual, it was a pack of lies, but people were paying attention. They still believed. They still had faith in government. And what happened? The Republicans have already conspired a dozen times this year to raise taxes, with limited success (so far). Their welfare bill renamed programs and cut the states in on the deal, but cut no spending. And last we checked, all bureaucracies remain standing. Ho hum.

The Republican had their chance to restore the civic religion, but they have nothing to show for it. They promised a revival and gave us gimmicks. What they didn't anticipate is that they would not have another chance. The loss of faith in government is now so deep in the public mind that there's no turning back. The bipartisan good-cop/bad-cop routine no longer compels belief.

The Republicans keep trying. Let's talk military. Stop the witch hunt against adulterers! Whoops, that doesn't go over so well with Christians. Try something else. Tax cuts! This time we mean it, except we'll raise them elsewhere by the same amount. Hmmm, a credibility problem on that front, so let's have hearings on something really interesting. How about pornography on the Internet?

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Then there's the Democrats and their pants-dropping standard-bearer. Clinton jumps from topic to topic, promising national school uniforms one day, the abolition of human cloning the next, and a new Marshall Plan the next. No takers. Now he turns to the culture. Down with "heroin chic," says he. Big deal. Now to the evil of church burnings. They must stop! Do you hear me? Hello?

Actually, no one's listening. There was a time, not long ago, when a presidential press conference held the whole of the nation's attention. What he said was news for days afterwards, as was the endless amount of commentary and analysis on what he said. These days, networks won't run presidential press conferences. The politicians used to hate C-SPAN because it showed them as they are. Now they are glad for any airtime they can get.

Political books are an automatic bust when it comes to commercial sales. Lifetime political "analysts" complain that their recent tract on this or that aspect of party politics is returned unopened by publishers. Not even insider accounts–like Dick Morris's, this decade's most powerful political consultant–can avoid the remainder bins for more than two weeks after publication.

The same goes for the business of policy-making. Washington is packed with people whose lifetime ambition was to control us through the science of public policy. They study this, they study that, they issue reports, they write legislation. They master every detail of

Dean of the Austrian School of economics, American historian, founder of modern libertarianism, and restorer of the Old Right, Murray N. Rothbard (1926–1995) was a one-man army of liberty. The *Triple R* is inspired by his spirit, and dedicated to his vision.

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the lobbies, the process, the rules. Then one day, nothing matters anymore. Policy is dead.

Since the New Deal, "policy science" was the purview of the left, and it erected institutes like Brookings and the National Bureau of Economic Research as fonts of planning wisdom. With Reaganism, the right stopped lobbing grenades into the beltway and tried its hand at policy science. Now, left and right cooperate in such goofy ventures as the "policy.com" website, where you go to find out the "news from the world of policy." It's a wasteland and a fraud. The "world of policy" is a den of thieves. The only correct policy is no policy.

For Heaven's sake, not even a measly package of disaster aid makes it through Congress as it once did. Every new proposal turns into a hot potato. Politicians complain they can't advocate anything without getting stomped to pieces by interest groups, constituents, e-mailers, and editorial writers. It's easy to lose heart when your business calls forth no love whatsoever, and only piles of hate.

Back in the early 1980s, we used to hear about legislative gridlock. The present political moment is about much more than that. It is the collapse of a century of national mythology. In Washington, no side wins. All sides lose. And no one cares either way.

This is a country in which the president's private parts are discussed more than his public policies. That coincides with declining tax compliance *and* audit rates. From the government's point of view, ridicule plus disobedience is an ominous combination.

But it's mass disinterest that really gets the liberals' goat. Frank Rich of the *New York Times* has called for a televised trial of Bill Clinton to discover whether he really did expose himself to Paula Jones. His reason? Something must be done to restore interest in Washington. Not even political scandals do so; only 1 in 5 polled know who John Huang or Kenneth Starr is.

The military has been the biggest loser in the government meltdown. It was once respected for its moral uprightness and discipline, and for protecting us against sworn enemies abroad. It was an ordering center of society, and a military career was respectable. But with the recent revelations on what a sex-soaked soap opera uniformed life has become, the military has dramatically shrunk in public stature.

All federal agencies are now seen as only the IRS once was: as direct threats to life and property.

And what about the shriveling FBI, once the nation's most exalted domestic bureaucracy? J. Edgar Hoover was a national hero for rooting out communists and plugging John Dillinger. Citizens paid attention to the "Ten Most Wanted." *The FBI Story* was a bestseller. A weekly tv show, scripted by the FBI and starring Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., got high ratings. The FBI always got its bad guy. It was to law enforcement what the Vatican is to religion. But now, only 1 in 10 people can identify the name Louis Freeh (while 4 of 5 know Tiger Woods).

The FBI now conjures up a different image: shooting civilians, doctoring evidence, covering up incompetence, engaging in bureaucratic malice. When CNN runs those clips of federal police sporting FBI and ATF windbreakers, does it inspire relief that we are being protected, or hope that they won't come into your neighborhood? The central government's police have shifted roles from friend of the public to foe. Government, at least in a democracy, is not supposed to work this way. Yet all federal agencies are now seen as only the IRS once was: as direct threats to life and property.

Only in this context can we understand such things as the China debate. A government the size of the U.S. thrives best when it is threatened by some foreign enemy. Foreign enemies cause us to cling to our own government for protection, to keep attention focused on distant bad guys and their virtuous opponents in D.C. China is the best candidate for the job: it's still officially communist, and, owing to cultural and language differences, most people are dependent on government and the official media to explain its politics and national ambitions. And practically everyone with a high stake in sustaining U.S. statism has jumped in to tell us how much of a threat China is to our national well-being.

There are other reasons why China is the enemy of the day. Industrialists and labor unions want its goods out of our country, for example. But that hardly explains the neocon/neoliberal effort to whip up war fever against this increasingly capitalist country whose taxes are less than half ours. Some communists! But the statists need an enemy. They'd like a war, or at least a cold war. That's why their propaganda tactics have borrowed so heavily

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from the wartime manual of disinformation.

The key to conservative involvement in the demonization of China can be found in the foreign policy magnum opus of Bill Kristol and Robert Kagan. "The remoralization of America at home," they write in *Foreign Affairs,* referring to the much needed revival of popular respect for government, "ultimately requires the remoralization of American foreign policy." And why should conservatives care? "Deprived of the support of an elevated patriotism, bereft of the ability to appeal to national honor, conservatives will ultimately fail in their effort to govern America."

Try as they might, however, it is difficult to persuade the public that China is a threat to the American way of life. All foreign threats pale in comparison to our own tax troops, our own national police force, our own intruding bureaucracies and regulators. What's more, the war hawks have discovered that their biggest barrier isn't refuting the arguments of their critics, but getting any public attention at all for their views.

One key reason for national dissolution is that Americans are no longer dependent for news on the media cartel and the government that feeds it its stories. The rise of newsletters such as this one, the Internet, and other new modes of communication have busted up that monopoly.

Technophiles used to say that the information revolution brought down socialism. In fact, it was socialism's inherent unviability. But there is one empire that the information revolution is indeed threatening: the U.S. government. That is why there is such a bipartisan consensus that the government has to regain control.

Another trend that is exploding the old civic culture is micro-secession from all official institutions. The home-school population is now bigger than the public-school population of 41 individual states. And these people are as hard core on politics as you will find.

In many ways, home schoolers are prototypical of the new American citizen: they pay no attention to national affairs and national figures on a daily basis, since they are boring and irrelevant. Their kids' education and family life beckon. Only when something directly threatens their freedom, even in the smallest of ways, do they prick up their ears. Then they go for the kill. And they succeed. State legislators all across the country have learned this the hard way. Cross the home schoolers and you're dead.

The government is trying to rule a nation of dropouts from the social democratic project.

From the government's point of view, the Oklahoma bombing had this benefit: it highlighted the dangers of too much rebellion. Clinton quietly credits it with his reelection. It frightened many Republicans into compliance. But will its value as a propaganda vehicle last? That's doubtful. Fully 75 percent of people polled after the verdict said that more bombers were involved than McVeigh and Nichols. Think of what that means: 3 of 4 people think the government is lying, even about this case.

Is there anything that could stop the present rebellion? A depression, possibly. A war too. But here's the key. At this stage in the government game, the power elite would be taking a huge risk to foment something of that magnitude to restore the national ethos. There's always the possibility that a big event could push the rebellion over the top.

The real right has always worked and hoped for the day when Americans of all stripes would hold in their hearts a constant, burning enmity toward central power. What we are in fact seeing is not hatred but disinterest. The government is trying to rule a nation of dropouts from the social democratic project. If the system can be brought down not with a bang but a yawn, so be it. It may be less dramatic than other great revolutions, but it can be just as effective. RRR

POWERFUL SONG, MAN

Jeffrey Tucker

A documentary showing on VH1 channels is "Bill Clinton: Rock 'n Roll President," hailed by baby-boomer columnist Christopher Matthews as "an extraordinary look at a man and his generation." The documentary quotes Clinton as saying that "Eleanor Rigby," a famed Beatles song dripping with pseudo-profundity, "may be the most powerful song I ever heard." Matthews agrees "entirely."

Indeed, Matthews–former press secretary to Jimmy Carter–goes even further. "Of all the speeches

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written since 1776, none conveys the American spirit of freedom so well as the song and rhythms transmitted from these shores in the 1960s." Move over Patrick Henry; Ringo Starr is what freedom's all about.

What is it about rock that causes its fans to believe such idiocies, e.g. that John Lennon is a great lyricist? Well, let's have a look at this beloved "Eleanor Rigby." It's from a 1966 Beatles album called "Revolver," which appeared a year before the group became followers of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. For those who believe that the history of rock is an important subject (and I don't), this album is a milestone.

Musically speaking, there are worst collection of songs to come out of the sixties. By 1966, the Beatles had a large following and money enough to buy actual musicians to arrange their "compositions," and to play real instruments like cellos and trumpets. These arrangements allowed Beatles fans to believe that they were listening to highbrow music–which was far from the case. No Beatles member could write a note of music, for example, much less arrange it for strings and brass.

That experiment prefigured today's rap "artists," who are entirely dependent on promoters, arrangers, and sound technicians, and create no music themselves. So too was the Beatles legendary "genius" a function of the greed of their handlers. Paul McCartney wrote a few period-piece tunes, of course, but what matters in this case is the words, which were written by the band during a rehearsal.

And what is the message in our president's "powerful" song? Atheism, nihilism, alienation. Eleanor Rigby, a name McCartney is said to have taken from a tombstone, is a woman whose life is spent serving her local church in various ways. For instance, she "picks up rice in the church where a wedding has been." *Ipso facto*, she "lives in a dream" and thus is "lonely." Like any nice religious person, she's a hypocrite, wearing "a face that she keeps in a jar by the door."

The song's narrator then has this Deep Thought: "All the lonely people, where do they all come from?" This Deep Thought is intended to suggest that we are not by nature intended to serve God. Why do people insist on doing it? The narrator asks, "where do they all belong?" Certainly not in church, according to Lennon. They are better off dead.

But, hey, Ms. Rigby comes off well compared to the real boneheaded villain of the song, the Lonely Man "Father McKenzie," an Irish Catholic priest. He spends his days "writing the words of a sermon that no one will hear" because "no one comes near." What a pariah this priest is! He even darns his "socks in the night." Why should he care, ask these slobs, whether his socks have holes "when nobody's there"?

In due course, Ms. Rigby the Lonely dies "in the church and was buried along with her name." What's more, "nobody came" to her funeral. So Father McKenzie is "wiping the dirt from his hands as he walks from the grave." And then the Beatle/narrator announces he knows all about Ms. Rigby's soul, Fr. McKenzie's soul, and the afterlife in general. "No one is saved."

And that's it: Bill Clinton's oh-so-powerful song. True to form, it reeks with hatred of Christianity (the church setting), bourgeois society (darning socks), the family (rice at weddings) and, above all, people who pretend to serve God (hypocrites, all).

And since "no one is saved," and pretending otherwise only makes people live lonely and pointless lives, God must be supplanted by rock's nihilism. All this became more explicit two decades latter, when Lennon was openly advocating full-scale global atheistic communism in songs like "Imagine."

"Eleanor Rigby" is typical of rock's degeneracy, even if the corruption is more buried here than in later efforts. But instead of recognizing the song for what it is, we are supposed to think of it as high art (it has a cello!) and its creators as geniuses. Even more absurd, we are supposed to think well of Clinton for calling it "powerful."

For a whole generation, rock calls up images of the sex they had and the drugs they ingested. Really powerful, man.

Clinton likes rock for the same reason everyone else of his generation does. It reminds him of how long he managed to prolong his adolescence, and, most of all, of fast times and loose living in the 1960s. For a whole generation, the tunes call up images of the sex they had and the drugs they ingested. Really powerful, man.

Life was so much easier then. So why *not* meditate on drug-inspired ditties popular a third of a century ago? It's more pleasant than present realities, in which pitiful Eleanor Rigby has been replaced by menacing Paula Jones. If the Beatles scoffed at natural law, as Ettiene Gilson might

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say, Ms. Jones is their undertaker. Now it's Clinton who wears a face he keeps in a jar by the door. RRR

SECOND WIND

Paul Gottfried

Michael Levin's *Triple R* observations about the Holocaust "getting a second wind" are both courageous and well-presented (July 1997). Levin contrasts the way that Western journalists and academicians treat former supporters and henchmen of Communist totalitarianism with their frenzied search for the still undiscovered accomplices of fallen rightwing governments. Why, Levin asks, do those who are generally indulgent of leftwing brutality never shut up about sins of omission committed by those dealing with the Nazis?

One might cite here those European Communists who have successfully sponsored laws criminalizing as "hate speech" communications and actions intended to cast doubt on the Holocaust. The laments about mass murder uttered by these Communist sponsors, needless to say, do not extend to the millions of slaughtered victims of Communism, who had it coming.

There crimes of omission are regularly committed on the European and American left. Note that the *New York Times*'s panting eagerness to punish the Swiss for not reimbursing the families of Holocaust victims with Swiss bank accounts is only exceeded by its enthusiasm for throwing amnesties at Communist mass murderers in Eastern Europe. This is entirely consistent with the *Times*'s tradition of paying homage to Communist butchers, from Stalin to Castro and Mao.

Levin is right that this imbalance in indignation betrays deeper ideological patterns, which explain why those who find Holocaust accomplices everywhere are not concerned about the bloody results of Communist tyranny. Because the left believes in radical social reconstruction for a homogenized world, it is easy for leftists to excuse the crimes of those who profess to be working toward the same end. It is equally understandable, as Levin remarks, that leftists should focus on rightist genocide to drive home the point that all evil stems from their opponents.

Those who find Holocaust accomplices everywhere are not concerned about the bloody results of Communist tyranny.

But Levin also notices something less predictable, that Christians often rival Jews in demanding that more attention be given to Nazi crimes and in blaming such acts on Christian civilization. Why, muses Levin, should gentiles be so excited about advertising a disaster which has been used to promote organized Jewish interests? If Jewish, and particularly Zionist, organizations stress the Holocaust in the context of raising Jewish ethnic consciousness and of increasing their own importance, why should American Christians stir up the same bitter memories? Above all, why do "educated" Christians blame their own religion for the destruction of European Jewry?

The web of complicity for Nazi crimes continues to be extended, and it is fair to assume that a gentile as well as Jewish public goes along with this trend. Christian theologians Malcolm Hay, Paul Van Buren, and Hans Kung pioneered Holocaust studies, with an anti-Christian twist, long before Jewish educators. This mania has taken on a life of its own, but it is one that Christians as well as Jews have helped to create and sustain. Jews were not the only ones applauding Daniel Goldhagen's publicized exaggerations, which blamed all Germans as compulsive Christians for happily participating in the Holocaust.

Christians as well as Jews have bestowed a misplaced reverence on other ill-documented hyperboles about responsibility for Nazi crimes. Thus the Swiss, who in fact had the best record of any European country for admitting Nazi refugees and were armed to the teeth in 1940 in preparation for a planned German invasion, supposedly stand exposed by the international press. They have been depicted as a nation of Nazi sympathizers, with such unmistakable gentiles as columnist Jim Hoagland, Senator Al D'Amato, and President Clinton out in front of the anti-Swiss pack.

Meanwhile, the Italian news magazine *L'Espresso* in mid-May went on about the Italian participation in Nazi genocide. Contrary to a prevalent belief, we are told, the Italian people supported the deportation of Jews under the Nazi-controlled Salo Republic; indeed Mussolini had come to power in 1922 with the explicit plan of making Italy free of Jews.

The only evidence given for these assertions is the opinion of the

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head of a newly founded Holocaust center in Milan. It may be assumed that the readers and editors of *L'Espresso* being in a country with only 40,000 Jews, are overwhelmingly Catholic. One might ask why Italian Catholics would wish to hear themselves compared to German Nazis, especially given the scant evidence in the hands of their accusers. Or why the national news magazine which presents these damning accusations fails to raise a single critical question and creates the impression that the charges are incontestably true.

No informed person would deny that some Christian societies have shameful histories of anti-Semitism. But a specifically Christian prejudice was at most a single variable in the formulation of Nazi genocidal policies. Nazi leaders expressed venomous hatred for Christianity, which they identified with Judaic culture, and some of the most vigorous anti-Nazis were professing Christians who opposed Hitler for religious reasons. In any event why don't Christian spokesmen berate themselves for their far more disgraceful history of ignoring Communist crimes–and, in many cases, speaking up for their perpetrators?

Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth denounced the Nazis unequivocally and in 1934 helped form the anti-Nazi *Bekennende Kirche*. But like that celebrated anti-Nazi pastor Martin Niemoller, Barth apologized incessantly for the Soviets and worked to promote "friendship" with Christian socialists Walter Ulbricht and Josef Stalin.

While Christian or once-Christian countries that fought the Nazis or were overrun by them torment themselves for not having done enough to protect Nazi victims, no

Why don't Christian spokesmen berate themselves for their far more disgraceful history of ignoring Communist crimes–and, in many cases, speaking up for their perpetrators?

such second thoughts have accompanied the discovery of Communist mass murders. Western clergymen do not lament their silence about Communist genocide. The recent outbursts among neocons and the Christian right about human rights in China is no exception to this rule. China has ceased to be Communist in its economic planning, and shows far less cruelty now than under the Maoist regime, which Western journalists and intellectuals praised.

Note that Levin does not do full justice to the tastelessness of the Jewish preoccupation with the Holocaust. The Holocaust fixation among American Jews represents the worst kind of ethnic whining. It combines attempts to settle scores with Christians by blaming them indiscriminately for things very few of them or their families did or countenanced, with efforts to rally Jews, as self-conscious ethnics, by demonizing the outsider.

The quotation that Levin provides from the self-pitying Robert Nozick is every bit as repulsive as Levin makes it seem. Nozick's claim that Christ's act of redemption for mankind has now been undone by the Holocaust gives Chutzpah a new meaning. This would be the case even if Nozick were not a Jewish atheist.

But such behavior is less appalling than having American Christians apologize for atrocities they never committed. Such conduct can only be traced to the civilizational suicide in which Western elites have come to revel.

Those who believe they are uniquely guilty of making gender, racial, and homophobic distinctions will believe they are guilty of anything, by virtue of their very existence. Though some clearly benefit from exploiting such misguided guilt, lunacy is present as well: otherwise it could not be exploited. According to my friend Rabbi Mayer Schiller, many Jews find it hard to accept that gentiles are as masochistic as they appear. Far easier to believe that they're dissembling than to imagine they take their own fits of guilt seriously.

We're also seeing the need felt by the media and the rest of the therapeutic priesthood to continue what Ernst Nolte calls the "European civil war" of the 1930s, minus its original players. Though that war as presented by Nolte was between an expansive Communism and its rightist opponents, a derivative confrontation continues to play itself out, as an exercise in shadowboxing.

Neither communists nor fascists remain around as world-historical forces; and while there are Euro-Communists sitting in the French and Italian assemblies, such groups mostly function as arbiters of political correctness. Their major legislative achievements in France, beside helping to expand entitlements, have been resisting attempts to reduce North African immigration and the crafting of hate-speech laws.

It may testify to our present decadence that Jean-Claude Gayssot, Francois Asensi, and Charles

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Lederman, among other French Communist deputies and senators, have been reduced to nasalizing clones of Abe Foxman. *Sic transit causa Stalinorum*!

Yet those nostalgic for the European civil war can rally to a phantom Popular Front, fighting all perceived manifestations of "the extreme right." Though the enemy can no longer be reasonably described as fascist imperialists, the same demonization has been applied to isolationist or anti-immigration "xenophobes." Even if the shoe doesn't fit, it can be forced onto the foot of those who refuse to be socialized.

Meanwhile, we are all to remember what has been drummed into our heads, that the Holocaust resulted from an unreconstructed Christian society, one in need of multiculturalism and of today's "caring professions." Even now further steps must be taken against the enemy, such as making sure that the U.S., as Earl Raab of the ADL warns, will have a majority of non-Whites and non-Europeans. That way the danger of an Aryan-Nazi takeover of America will be surmounted "irreversibly."

But seeing that some may be foolish enough to oppose the combating of "prejudice," the old demon may still gain the upper hand, as "A Call to Vigilance" published in *Le Monde* five years ago makes clear. In advocating the suppression of French New Right publications, this call signed by Europe's leading progressive intellectuals, including Umberto Eco, reminds us that the war against "the enemies of democracy" (read the enemies of the Popular Front) remains for all "human-right activists" a sacred duty.

Though the Holocaust was not specifically mentioned, it might have been there, as a set piece in an increasingly fictitious morality play. This is where the Holocaust has gone, from a historical catastrophe to an orgy of victimological name-calling and staged confessions. In this fresh incarnation, it has found a second wind and may eventually get a third. With such organized, well-financed nuttiness, one must always assume the worst. RRR

THE GOP TAX SHUFFLE

L. H. R., Jr.

The GOP appears institutionally incapable of sending a clear message on what it stands for. It's both for and against welfare, for and against foreign aid, and now, for and against high taxes. Its lack of clarity will doom Congressman Bill Archer's most recent budget proposal.

The driving principle behind his package, we're told, is a balanced budget. That's a worthy goal, but there are right and wrong ways to go about it. Archer has chosen the path of "revenue neutrality," which means, in practice, that if one tax goes down, another must go up at the same time.

This merely shifts the unbearable burden of big government from one spot to another. Imagine if a locality fought crime with a similar technique. It would battle car thefts while letting home burglaries go unchecked. Then it would be shocked that townsfolk don't think this is a net improvement.

So who gets clobbered in the Archer plan? Just for starters, anyone who purchases airline tickets or works for that industry. That means practically everyone. He wants to extract a whopping $3.8 billion from an industry that only made $2.6 billion in profits last year. The new Archer tax would add, for example, $40 to $60 to the price of an overseas ticket.

What's more, the Congress just raised the airline tax earlier this year with a 10 percent charge on all domestic tickets. The leadership claimed it was merely putting an end to a "tax holiday" resulting from a tax that expired in 1996. The implication: only on "holidays" do people get to use their own money instead of shelling it out to the politicians to waste.

Here the GOP had a golden opportunity to prove it was for limiting the size of government. It didn't even have to take a vote. It could have let the expired tax stay expired. Instead, we witnessed the gruesome spectacle of GOP lawmakers complaining that the airline industry earned "windfall profits" last year. Now the same industry is going to pay big time.

Say, wasn't it the Democrats who were supposed to specialize in socking it to business with the politics of envy? Profits are the sign that an industry is successfully serving the consuming public. What a disgrace that the GOP now sees profits as a signal that an industry isn't being taxed enough.

And who pays for this tax? It can't be passed on directly to consumers. Their willingness to pay for flights doesn't remain the same regardless of the price of tickets (as economists say, consumer demand is not inelastic). Instead, people purchase fewer tickets and go on fewer

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trips than they otherwise would. That hurts business and consumers.

The Archer plan would also level a newly minted $2 fee just for taking off. That may not sound like much, and it's not for large airlines that fly coast-to-coast nonstop. But it's a killer for low-fare carriers. Their very existence depends on hopscotching from airport to airport. Such short flights can easily be replaced by driving, and the consumer's decision on the best means of travel is highly sensitive to price.

And when the Archer plan isn't plotting the bankruptcy of the airline industry, it's targeting all commerce on Indian reservations. You don't have to love gambling to appreciate the fact that gaming is the most successful enterprise ever developed on these territories. It's lifted tens of thousands from poverty, and led to many spin-off commercial operations.

Congress wants to continue its long-running racket of campaigning like libertarians and governing like national socialists.

But to the GOP, it's just another profit-making operation that deserves a kick in the teeth from Washington, D.C. So Archer plans to extract $4.5 billion from the Indians. And it's not only gaming that pays, but any business that operates on a reservation.

Native Americans have not exactly had an easy time of it over the last hundred years. After the Civil War, they were muscled around by a newly enlarged and empowered U.S. Army, and told where to live and how to live. Tax freedom is the least the federal government can do as compensation. Instead, Archer proposes to send the U.S. tax cavalry after them.

The most insidious new tax in Archer's proposal is buried so deep that it's barely noticeable in the text. It would tax tuition breaks that the children of many college and university employees get as a part of their employment contracts.

The GOP would require parents to declare the market value of their children's education, and fork over extra money. The rationale may be that liberal eggheads deserve whatever suffering the GOP can impose on them. But this is remarkably shortsighted as well as sneaky. It sets the stage for all fringe benefits to be taxed.

If nonexistent tuition charges can be taxed for their market value, Congress can also tax the value of vacations, medical insurance, health clubs, or child care that employees get gratis from their companies. After all, these are market goods as well, with an identifiable market value.

Yes, the Republican proposal provides some tax relief. Try this one: in the year 2014, the inheritance tax exemption rises from $600,000 to one million. Thanks a lot, fellas. In addition, there are minor child-tax credits (about ten years too late), capital-gains tax indexation (twenty years too late), and some other miscellaneous exemptions.

But because of the GOP's unwillingness to stand on principle, the good aspects of the bill will be swamped by the bad in the public-relations battle.

Why can't Congress just cut taxes—any taxes—and be done with it? Because it wants to continue its long-running racket of campaigning like libertarians and governing like national socialists. How many times must voters punish them before they get the message that nobody trusts a hypocrite? RRR

THE INDISPENSABLES

L. H. R., Jr.

So now we're the "Indispensable Nation." The phrase is drummed into our heads by the Clinton administration as if it were a moniker granted by the gods.

The world can't do without us and our works, which are necessary and sufficient for global order. The corollary is that *we* can do without any other nation. We're indispensable; everyone else is dispensable, meaning expendable.

The phrase first appeared in Clinton's speech at the Democratic convention in 1996. He said it again in the presidential debates and at campaign stops. Then in the state of the union address, Clinton said we're indispensable because we spread soldiers, spooks, and moolah around the world.

The phrase has become a staple of administration testimony before Congress. Trade Rep. Charlene Barshefsky says we've got to expand Nafta to Chile because we're the "indispensable nation." Madeline Albright has picked up on it. Will the head of HUD, yet another indispensable, be next in line?

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The phrase is supposed to justify the projection of power around the world. It must therefore nauseate the patriots of every other country. Imagine if France, China, Cuba, or Japan said this about themselves. We'd ridicule them, and call them arrogant or dangerous. The bully on the block who says he's the key to life is really asking for it.

Has any other regime in history so openly declared its immortality? Two come to mind, the Roman Empire and the Third Reich. We remember their absurd claims because of the irony.

Like a swaggering B movie villain, we tell other countries we made you what you are, and we can swat you down anytime you get out of line. You need us so badly that you *can't* defy us, so don't kick our troops out, regardless of the crimes they commit or the havoc they wreak.

Meanwhile, the escapades of the Clinton Crew are the butt of comedy routines around the globe. It's only in this sense that the world can't live without us.

Civilization, even freedom, existed and thrived long before the D.C. swamps were drained. If the U.S. government vanished today, civilization would go on–as hard as that might be for the Clinton administration to believe.

The U.S. as Immortal Imperium has long been a staple of political legend. School kids learn that the U.S. had to conquer the Indians and the American South. Next came the Kingdom of Hawaii, then the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the other jewels of Manifest Destiny.

Civilization, even freedom, existed and thrived long before the D.C. swamps were drained.

Woodrow Wilson expanded the doctrine to Europe. FDR dreamed up four welfare rights, declared them essential freedoms, and lied us into war. Truman erected a permanent war economy, and his successors added to the edifice.

The global-savior complex reached its apex in the Reagan years, when the military-industrial complex declared itself the protector of the free world. Taxpayers funded foreign bandits against regimes we didn't like, and bought the loyalties of bandit-governments we did like. The specter of international communism was supposed to make it all plausible.

With those days gone, in the midst of apparent peace and prosperity, never has the government been so dispensable. It's no coincidence that this new phrase pops up just as big government clamors for self-justification. The Cold War's end has led to a crisis of faith.

What's our role in the world? Where are our dangerous enemies? We want to pick a fight to revive the glory days of global drama, but we can't find any takers. In the meantime, we proceed with the vital task of erecting more monuments to war on Capitol lawns already littered with them.

What is the actual distinguishing mark of the United States? Many countries have freer economies than

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ours, and most are in Asia. In New Zealand, Switzerland, and Chile, the tax burden is lower, and in Australia and even Ireland, it's easier to start and grow a business. Moreover, their public sectors are not burdened by absurd levels of unfunded liabilities or "defense."

No, our unique trait is as host to history's biggest government. This is not something to be proud of. As liberty, decentralism, and peace are rediscovered all over the world, it's a particular disgrace. The Clinton administration isn't indispensable. At best, it's forgettable, the moniker most of the American public puts on all these Olympian beings. RRR

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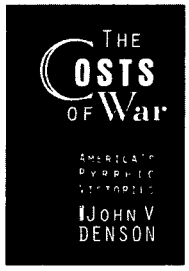

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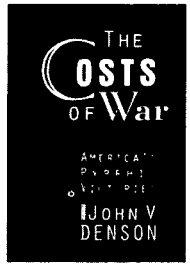

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